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Studien zur Bevölkerungsbewegung in Deutschland in den letzten Jahrzehnten mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ehelichen Fruchtbarkeit. Von PAUL MOMBERT. Privatdozent an der Universität Freiburg i. Br. (Karlsruhe: G. Braunsche Hofbuchdruckerei und Verlag, 1907. Pp. 280, 8m.)

This is one of the most painstaking studies of the movement of population in Germany which has been made, and on account of the remarkable conclusions reached deserves a somewhat extended notice. The book is divided into five chapters: I, Mortality; II, Marriages; III, Births; IV, Excess of Births; V, Malthus' Laws of Population. Of these, the one relating to births is the most important, and over half of the book is included in this chapter. These topics will be taken up in the order in which they appear in the text, and the most important conclusions will be briefly stated. The arguments are supported by a wealth of figures, and the 118 statistical tables give an indication of the intensive nature of the work. The proof correction was evidently made with great care, and in a careful reading only two mistakes in the figures were found.

I, Mortality. The course of the death-rates in the nineteenth century down to 1875 was irregular on account of the appearance of cholera and small-pox at irregular intervals, but from this date there is a decided decrease. The author thinks that the death-rates as computed for the early decades were too high, since the returns of the deaths were more accurate than the censuses of population. The conclusion is reached that the decrease in the death-rate, for some time before the ultimate lowest level is reached, will be gradually retarded.

II, Marriages. The variations in the marriage-rate are attributed to the changes in economic conditions. One indication of these conditions is found in migration, and in the years when the emigration was large the marriage-rate was generally low. There has also been a migration from the country districts to the cities, the result of which has been to change the age distribution of these sections, making the crude marriage-rate higher in the cities and the refined rate higher in the rural districts. There has been a decrease in the average age at marriage, an increase in the proportion married for the first time, and an increase in the average duration of marriage.

III, Births. The course of the birth-rate during the nineteenth century has been roughly as follows: an increase to the decade 1821-30, a decrease to 1841-50, an increase to 1871-80, followed by an almost uninterrupted decrease. The hard times and political disturbances in the middle of the century caused an increase in the deaths and emigration, and a decrease in the marriages and births. The author thinks that the decrease in the birth-rate at this time is to be attributed almost entirely to the decrease in the marriage-rate.

For the decrease in the birth-rate within recent years a different cause must be found, for not only has the marriage rate been increasing but the average age at marriage is younger, and the duration of marriage has increased. Changes in economic conditions must account for this. It is an almost invariable rule that with rising economic conditions and increasing culture the fecundity decreases, and this connection can be traced not only for different social groups, but within the same general group. A study then follows by geographical divisions, followed by a temporal comparison. In the sections where there has been the greatest industrial and social awakening the decrease in birth-rates has been most rapid.

The distinction is sharply drawn between the desire for sexual gratification and the desire for offspring. Although the increase in the number of marriages and the decrease in the average age at marriage would not point to any decrease in the former desire, it is very evident that the latter is decreasing. The intention seems to be not to have no children, but few children.

As an index of the economic condition of the population the number of savings-bank books and the per capita amount on deposit is taken. It is shown that in districts with high fecundity the savings are small, and that, as a rule, they vary inversely. Also in those provinces in which the savings have increased most rapidly there has been the greatest decrease in legitimate fecundity.

The same problem is studied in the light of age distribution, immigration, race, religious confession, prevalence of venereal disease, and occupation, and the opinion is that these are of minor importance. Economic condition is the great force which regulates fecundity, and where exceptions to the general rule are found, they are the result of disturbing causes which can only temporarily obscure the effect of its action.

IV, Excess of Births. Although in most countries the excess of births has continued to increase, there are some countries like England, Scotland, and Sweden, where the movement in the opposite direction has already begun. There is a limit to the decrease in the death-rate, and the more nearly this is reached, the slower is the decrease, but when a decrease in the fecundity appears it becomes increasingly rapid. The author thinks that it is but a question of time when the countries with improving economic conditions shall show a falling off in the excess of births.

V, Malthus' Laws of Population. Malthus found in moral restraint one of the causes which kept population at the level of the food supply. The effect of its action was to postpone the age at marriage. But he did not place enough weight upon similar motives to limit the number of children after marriage. Dr. Mombert thinks that Malthus failed to give sufficient weight to the fact that sexual desire is not constant, but that there is a close relation between it and economic and social position, a relation which is much closer than that assumed by Malthus to exist between social position and marriage.

The book closes with the prophecy that soon France will not be the only country to be concerned with the slow increase of its population.

On laying down the book the impression remains that although some of the conclusions reached may need to be revised, the time devoted to its study has been well spent, for it is not often that one meets a better application of the statistical method to an important social problem. It would be well if a similar piece of intensive work could be done for this country.

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Report of the Providence Conference of the National Municipal League. By CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF, Editor. (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1907. \$2.)

This volume records the work of the National Municipal League during the year 1907, and at its annual conference held at Providence, R. I., November 19-22, 1907.